

The Five Dysfunctions of a Mentor Relationship*

1. Absence of Vulnerability and Trust

Persons in mentor relationships that lack trust:

- conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another
- hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback
- fail to recognize and tap in to one another's skills and experiences
- find reasons to avoid spending time together

Overcome lack of trust: Do a personal history exercise such as "share your greatest challenge that you failed at and what did you learn, and...your greatest challenge that you overcame and what you learned, etc." The mentor must share first.

2. Fear of Conflict

Persons in a mentor relationship that fear ideological (not personal) conflict:

- have boring times together
- ignore controversial topics that are critical to mentee success
- fail to tap into the opinions and perspectives of the mentor and mentee
- waste time and energy on things that don't matter

Overcome fear of conflict: mentor teaches or discusses the importance and value of differences and diversity, acknowledging that each person has different ways of handling and avoiding conflict. Mentor invites different views without judgment. Agree to tell each other (self regulate) when conflict feels like it is going overboard.

3. Lack of Commitment

Persons in a mentor relationship that lack commitment:

- create ambiguity and complacency (it's not that important)
- breed lack of confidence and fear of failure

Overcome lack of commitment: Mentor demonstrates that the mentee is heard and understood and that there is clarity of how the

mentee can be helpful by confirming mutual agreements. Mentee shares what matters most to them as he/she balances self, work, family, church and social/emotional needs.

4. Avoidance of Mutual Accountability (One to the other)

Persons in a mentor relationship that avoid accountability:

- encourage mediocrity
- miss and/or keep postponing times agreed upon to meet
- may blame the other for failure

Overcome avoidance of accountability: Embrace accountability by doing a "mentor relationship effectiveness" exercises: Each person writes down one thing the other person does well that has been helpful to the other. Each person writes down one thing that the other could do better that would be helpful to the other. Each person write down one's most hoped for outcome from the mentor relationship. Etc.

5. Inattention to Results

Persons in a mentor relationship that fail to focus on results:

- rarely experience that anything was accomplished
- become easily distracted
- stagnate and fail to grow

Overcome inattention to results: Write down goals and evaluate them often. Often, give each other recognition and show gratitude for each other. Plan celebration events. Report your experience to the pastor or priesthood renewal leadership team.

A "take-off" by Tom Mountenay

*From: **The Five Dysfunctions of a Team**

By Patrick Lencioni Jossey Bass Publishers San Francisco 2002; and **Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team** by the same author Bass 2005.